Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO

Art
TAKESHI MORIKI

Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

3

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

contents

Chapter 11 5

Chapter 12 35

Chapter 13 59

Chapter 14 83

Chapter 15 107

Chapter 16 129

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO

Art
TAKESHI MORIKI

Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Volume Three

Presented by
Fumiaki Maruto &
Takeshi Moriki

Character Design by
Kurehito Misaki

IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THE TIME I STARTED AT TOYO-GASAKI.

SWEET! HERE THEY ARE! THE NEW RELEASES FROM FANTASTIC PAPER-BACKS!

WHAT A HAUL!

...TURNED OUT TO BE—

ONOME IN LOVE

ASUMI

"THE DEBUT FROM THE WINNER OF THE 40TH FANTASTIC PAPER-BACKS' MOST PROMISING NEWCOMER AWARD!" HM?

40TH FANTA MOST

THE SINGLE VOLUME I CASUALLY PICKED THAT I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT .....

CHAPTER 11

THIS IS WAGOUSHI! WAGOUSHI STATION!

WELL, IT WAS LATE WHEN I LEFT KATOU.

AL-READY PRETTY DARK OUT.

SENPAI'S DEFINITELY AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE .....

GOTTA KEEP MY EYES PEELED..... IF SHE SLIPS PAST ME, IT'S ALL OVER.

I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE HER MOM COULDN'T JUST TELL ME OUTRIGHT WHERE SHE WENT.

In Wa-goushi, I think it was?

Oh? You're a friend of Utaha's? I think she said she was going to meet some-one.

BUT IT WAS A HELP ANYWAY!

IF I DON'T, I'LL.....

I WANT TO TALK TO UTAHA-SENPAI TODAY, NO MATTER WHAT.

I NEED TO TELL HER MY THOUGHTS ASAP.

GAAA (WHIRRR)

CHOU-BUNDOU BOOK-STORE.

ODDS ARE SHE'S HERE, RIGHT .....?

SIGN: CHOUBUNDOU BOOKSTORE

BANNER: UTAKO KASUMI SIGNING

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU! I'M SO OVER-WHELMED, KASUMI-SENSEI!!

IT WAS LAST SUMMER ..... AT THE SIGNING FOR THE RELEASE OF THE SECOND VOLUME .....

COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS IS WHERE WE FIRST MET.....

TH-THANK YOU.....

I'M A HUGE FAN OF METRO-NOME IN LOVE!

I'VE READ THE FIRST ONE OVER TWENTY TIMES!

BEING FIRST WAS LUCKY FOR ME!

I HEAR YOU LINED UP REALLY EARLY?

BUT MORE THAN HALF THE TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE.

FLIWAA (BLUSH)

I SEE!

I STILL CRY EVERY WEEK WHEN I READ IT!

O..... OHH .....

I SEE .....

C'MON, PLEASE— GIMME A BREAK! FOR REAL!

CRAP!

NEXT SPOT!

AFTER THAT, WE STARTED MEETING IN WAGOUSHI A LOT.....

THAT CLIFF-HANGER IN VOLUME THREE..... WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH IT .....?

WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN!?

DON'T MAKE A SCENE HERE.

IT'S JUST A LITTLE STORY IN A NOVEL.

TOMOYA-KUN, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN?

HUH? WHAT?

IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR ME TO SAY?

UH, YEAH, TO A GOD MAYBE!

IT'S NATURAL FOR AN AUTHOR TO LISTEN TO HER READERS' THOUGHTS AND DESIRES, ISN'T IT?

AT THE VERY LEAST, THEY'RE WORTH CONSIDER-ING.

THAT'S IT, HUH .....?

.....A WRITER PULLS MATERIAL FROM EVERY FACET OF NORMAL LIFE!

OH, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THE RAIN SCENE DIALOGUE IN THIS VOLUME...

IT WAS EXACTLY WHAT I TOLD YOU I'D IMAGINED BEFORE, WASN'T IT?

SHE'S NOT HERE EITHER .....

UTAHA-SENPAI..... WHERE ARE YOU.....?

WE'D ALWAYS SIT AT THIS TABLE AND TALK .....

11:00 P.M..... THREE TRAINS TO GO UNTIL THE LAST ONE OF THE NIGHT .....

ONLY OPTION LEFT IS TO CATCH HER WHEN SHE TRIES TO GET ON THE TRAIN HOME.

I CAN'T READ THIS!

IF I DON'T FIND HER BEFORE THAT, I'LL JUST HAVE TO GIVE UP FOR TODAY .....

IF I DON'T CATCH ONE OF THESE TRAINS, I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET HOME EITHER .....

BUT.....

WHY .....?

HOW COME...? I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS.

I WANT YOU TO READ IT BEFORE THE REST OF THE WORLD DOES.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I KNOW YOU WON'T LEAK IT TO ANYONE, AND I GOT PERMISSION FROM MY EDITOR TOO.

.....

I WAS HOPING TO GET YOUR SEAL OF APPROVAL ...

... TOMOYA-KUN.

ONCE THE FINAL VOLUME'S OUT, I'LL BUY IT AND TELL YOU MY EVERY THOUGHT.

AND NO MATTER WHAT DEVEL-OPMENTS TAKE PLACE, I'LL ALWAYS APPROVE BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WROTE THEM.

BUT THAT'S JUST BLIND ADULATION.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.

THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, SENPAI .....?

YOU'LL KNOW IF YOU READ IT.

..... MAYBE.

"MAYBE" .....?

I WANT TO KNOW HOW THE CONCLUSION MAKES YOU FEEL.....

...AND WHAT KIND OF REACTION YOU'LL GIVE ME.

I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN, OKAY—?

WON'T YOU PLEASE READ...

...THIS FIRST DRAFT OF THE FINAL VOLUME?

I MEAN, I...

... CAN'T BE RESPON-SIBLE FOR THIS BOOK.

WHY NOT .....?

.....!

.....I DECLINE.

..... AGH!

YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?

.....

YOU REALLY NEED ME TO SAY IT!?

IT'S OBVIOUSLY 'COS I'M SUCH A HUGE FAN!

AFTER THAT..... WE DIDN'T MEET AGAIN FOR OVER THREE MONTHS .....

SUU (SIGH)

NEITHER OF US TRIED TO PATCH UP THE RELATION-SHIP...

...AND THAT CREATED A DEEP RIFT THAT'S STILL THERE NOW.

LOOK FORWARD TO THE LAST VOLUME, THEN.

GOODBYE, RINRI-KUN.

I HAVE TO TALK TO HER..... BEFORE THE DAY'S OUT!

SO..... I HAVE TO SEE HER.....

ZUBASHI (THWAP)

PITO (STOP)

MOSQUITO

MUUUN (BZZZ)

I NEVER LOOKED *THERE* .....

ARRRGGH!

OH .....!

THEN, ABOUT THE PROTAG-ONIST...

GOING BACK TO THE LOVE TRIANGLE IN MY PREVIOUS WORK—

DON (BAM)

DON

DON

?

DON

DON

DON

DON

SENPAAAI!!

1325

SHAAAAAAAA (FWSSSSSH)

GO BOOM

GO

GO

GO

WAITING FOR HER AT THE STATION

LOOKING FOR UTAHA-SENPAI, I WOUND UP AT A DINER ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF A HOTEL.

SO YOU'RE REAL! YOU'RE TAKI-KUN!

SHE WAS HAVING A MEETING WITH HER EDITOR.

THE RESTAURANT CLOSED AT MIDNIGHT, SO WE LEFT.

THEN SENPAI SAID, "COME WITH ME," SO I MINDLESSLY FOLLOWED HER...

...AND FOR SOME REASON, SHE BROUGHT ME TO ROOM 25 ON THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR (A SINGLE ROOM, ANYWAY YOU LOOK AT IT)!

AND HERE I AM.

Sonoko Machida 町田尚子

Fushikawa Publishing Corporation
Fushikawa Fantastic Paperbacks

I'D LIKE YOU TO DROP DEAD RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO COLD TO ME AFTER I LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR YOU!?

ACK!

GACHA (KACHAK)

SUTA (STEP)

SUTA

NOW, THEN..... RINRI-KUN.

SUTA

Y-YES .....

I'M SORRY!

IS IT 'COS I YELLED FOR YOU AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS AND MADE EVERYONE STARE?

HAH HAAAH...

IS IT 'COS I MISSED THE LAST TRAIN, AND NOW I HAVE TO STAY HERE?

OR IS IT —?

GOKURI (GULP)

HAAH .....

FINE, WHAT-EVER.

GISHI (CREAK)

.....AGH!

THE SMELL OF SOAP.....

...AND SHAMPOO.....

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT EDITOR GET OUT OF THIS .....?

MACHIDA-SAN JUST TOOK CARE OF THE FORMALITIES. HERE'S HER MESSAGE.

BUT YOU ARE NOW, SEE?

I'M NOT EVEN A GUEST HERE!

I MEAN, I SHOULD GO! I'M IMPOSING ON YOU!

WHAT IS WITH THE PER-FECT TEAM-WORK !?

サッ

1 SASA (SCURRY)

HEY, RINRI-KUN?

Y-YES .....?

DID YOU COME HERE LOOKING FOR ME?

NO. WELL .....

...YES.

AND YOU EVEN MISSED THE LAST TRAIN?

UH... YES.

YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT.....

..... UM, I GUESS .....

YES.

ON A DATE WITH KATOU-SAN?

I WENT TO THE ROKU-TENBA MALL TODAY.

IT HASN'T BEEN OPEN FOR LONG, SO IT WAS RIDICU-LOUSLY BUSY...

GUTAAAAAA (LIMP)

あぁあたく

...AND I SUDDENLY STARTED FEELING SICK AS SOON AS WE GOT THERE

.....

.....

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN THAT, BUT I WAS DOING RESEARCH.

YES.

VERY.

BUT STILL .....

...IT WAS FUN, RIGHT?

SHE SHOPPED TO HER HEART'S CONTENT WITHOUT REINING IT IN FOR ME...

WHEN I WAS DOWN, SHE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ME, LIKE PERSON GETS...

YEAH. IT WAS SO FUN THAT I WAS ABLE TO ANSWER WITHOUT HESITATION.

...AND WHEN IT WAS TIME TO GO, SHE SAW ME OFF WITH A SMILE .....

...SHE ACCEPTED THE PRESENT I GAVE HER IN RETURN ...

...SHE GAVE ME A KINDA SPECIAL PRESENT TO SAY THANKS ...

.....

SO .....?

IT WAS FUN 'COS I WAS WITH KATOU.

IT WAS REALLY FUN.....

KATOU'S FUN 'COS SHE'S NORMAL.

AND THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU TO REVISE IT.....

YOUR PLOT.

YOUR PLOT WAS DEFINITELY GREAT!

IT WAS MAGNIFI-CENT! IT WAS ON SUCH A GRAND SCALE! IT WAS OVER-FLOWING WITH EPICNESS .....

THOSE ALL MEAN THE SAME THING.

URK...

.....UM, I'LL JUST REPHRASE IT AS "AWESOME," THEN.

IF YOU THINK THAT HIGHLY OF IT, WHY REVISE?

THE PLOT ONLY REVOLVES AROUND A DESTINY THAT SPANS GENERA-TIONS.

WHAT IT DOESN'T HAVE IS A RETURN TO NOR-MALCY.

ONLY THE LITTLE SISTER FROM THE PREVIOUS LIFE COMES BACK. THERE'S NO ENDING WHERE THE NORMAL GIRL CLASSMATE MAKES IT BACK!

WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER, WON'T WE, ONII-CHAN?

WHY DID YOU MAKE IT THAT WAY?

WHY DID YOU LET THAT CUTE, ORDINARY GIRL DIE?

BECAUSE IF I DIDN'T, THEN THE KID SISTER FROM THE PREVIOUS LIFE WOULD VANISH!

AND IF RURI WAS ERASED, THEN THE STUFF IN THE PAST WOULD BECOME MEANING-LESS.

THE FOUNDA-TION OF THE STORY THAT BUILT UP OVER ALL THE GENER-ATIONS WOULD CRUMBLE, DON'T YOU SEE!?

IN THE EVERYDAY PART OF THE STORY, HE WAS CLOSE TO MEGURI BEFORE HER MEMORIES STARTED COMING BACK!

BUT AREN'T BOTH RURI AND MEGURI IMPORTANT TO THE MAIN CHARACTER RIGHT NOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

.....BUT WHETHER OR NOT THAT'S PRESENT-DAY MEGURI IS UP FOR DEBATE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THOSE MEMORIES HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE MAKEUP OF PRESENT-DAY MEGURI'S PERSONALITY!

WELL, MEGURI WAS BORN WITH INHERITED MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

!

EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE...

...IT'S NOT OKAY FOR HER PRESENT-DAY SELF AND ALL HER MEMORIES TO JUST BE SNUFFED OUT!

BUT! SHE WAS BORN LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, WENT TO SCHOOL LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, FELL IN LOVE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.....

...AND SURE, MAYBE THEY CHANGE HER LIFE, AND SHE FALLS FOR HER DESTINED LOVE FROM A PREVIOUS INCARNATION.

OF COURSE MEGURI'S TROUBLED BY HER PAST MEMORIES AND IS AT THEIR MERCY...

THAT PART OF HER THAT'S ALL HER OWN—THE THOUGHTS, HISTORY, MEMORIES SHE'S LIVED WITH...

...SHOULDN'T THAT BE MORE PRECIOUS!?

HAAH...

HAAH...

I HAD A GREAT TIME HANGING OUT NORMALLY WITH A NORMAL GIRL.

Y'KNOW, KATOU...

IF MEGURI WAS THERE, I THINK EVEN AN "AWAY GAME" WOULD BE FUN.

IF KATOU— I MEAN, MEGURI .....

...THIS ARGUMENT WOULD SEEM ABSURD TO ANYONE ON THE OUTSIDE.

ORDINARY LIFE WITH MEGURI WOULD BE REALLY ENJOYABLE IF YOU ASK ME!

THEY MIGHT STILL JUST BE NOTES ON PAPER, BUT I'M STARTING TO TAKE THE LIVES OF THESE CHARACTERS SERIOUSLY.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THEM, AND I'M TRYING TO LEAD THEM TO HAPPI-NESS.

SO I DON'T WANT THEM TO LOSE OUT TO DESTINY! I WANT THEM TO GET THEIR NORMAL LIVES BACK!

CHEESY, ARDENT, CREEPY ...

A FOOLISH BUT LOVABLE RACE .....

I WANT THE ORDI-NARY GIRL FROM SCHOOL .....

I WANT MEGURI TO HAVE AN ENDING TOO!

BUT, KATOU..... NOW I CAN SAY IT LOUD AND CLEAR!

(ROAR)

I WANT A ROUTE WHERE NORMAL, AVERAGE LOVE WINS OVER DESTINY FROM A PAST LIFE!

THAT'S WHAT DEFINES AN OTAKU! THERE, I SAID IT AT LAST!

.....I MEAN, I KNOW I'LL ENJOY IT AT LEAST. BEYOND THAT, I CAN'T SAY.....

YES!

YOU THINK THAT'LL TURN OUT WELL?

NO, THAT'S SOME-THING WE CAN'T IGNORE ...

...GIVEN YOUR SENSIBIL-ITIES AND MARKET AWARE-NESS.

YOU HEARD MACHIDA-SAN BEFORE, RIGHT?

THANKS TO YOUR BLOG, MY BOOKS' SALES WENT UP 30 PERCENT.

HUH?

SO SHOULD WE KILL OFF RURI, THEN?

SO..... IT'S COOL, RIGHT?

I WANNA FLIRT WITH MEGURI MORE.

SENPAI .....?

...THE EMOTIONS OF THE PRESENT ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ATTACH-MENTS OF THE PAST, RIGHT?

TO YOU .....

IN THAT CASE, IT'D BE BETTER TO REDO IT FROM SCRATCH .....

I'LL JUST HAVE TO GIVE UP ON IT ALL.

.....
AS AN OTAKU, SENPAI HAS HER OWN STUB-BORN HANG-UPS TOO
.....

.....
THAT'S RIGHT.

OHH
.....

LEAVE HER.

RI-RINRI-KUN?

AND I'M REALLY INTO HOW THEIR RELATION-SHIP IS ALWAYS AFFECTED BY THE PAST.

I KNOW I SAID I FEEL SORRY FOR MEGURI, BUT RURI'S TOTALLY HOT.

HUH .....?

THE IDEA OF HER COMING AFTER ME BLINDLY GETS ME ALL WORRIED ABOUT HER.

AND BEING CALLED "ONII-CHAN" OR "ONII-SAMA" IS FREAKING SWEET TOO.

.....!

..... HMPH! YOU JUST HAVE NO STAN-DARDS!

SO? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?

YOU CAN GO FOR EITHER GIRL.

THAT WAY, IT'LL CATER TO A WIDER RANGE OF USER DESIRES.

HEH HEH .....

IT'S SENPAI'S USUAL FACE AGAIN!

GREAT!

SO WE'LL START ON THE PLOT REVAMP RIGHT AWAY, OKAY!?

YES!

WE'LL ADD IN MORE CHOICES ...

...SO ALL THE WAY THROUGH, EVEN AT THE VERY END, YOU CAN CHOOSE EITHER MEGURI OR RURI!

OKAY, WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP?

HUH? WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I'M GOING TO SHUT MYSELF IN HERE AND GET TO WORK.

GACHA (KACHAK)

WRITING THE PLOT MAKES ME... UM.....

OH .....!

GO (RUMBLE)

GO

RINRI-KUN.

NO, IT'S FINE. YOU CAN WRITE IN HERE.

IT'S NATURAL FOR A DIRECTOR TO STICK CLOSE TO A CREATOR WHEN IT'S RIGHT BEFORE THE DEADLINE, RIGHT?

THAT'S WHAT I WENT AND SAID, BUT...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT GIRL! SHE JUST CAME OUT OF NOWHERE AND STOLE MY MAN!

CRAP! CRAP! CRAP!

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! WHY DON'T MY FEELINGS REACH YOU!?

WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO SAY!? A WRITER CAN'T FALL IN LOVE!? A WRITER CAN'T GET SERIOUS WITH A FAN!?

THERE'S SOME NON-MEGURI DIALOGUE GETTING MIXED UP IN THERE TOO!

S-SENPAI!

KATA

KATA (KTAK)

...A CREATOR'S TRUE NATURE... IS REALLY SCARY.

END

CHAPTER 12

AM 9:54

-YAWN-

YOU GOING FOR BREAK-FAST OR SOME-THING?

HUH?

NO.

I HAVE TO RUN.

IT'S FINE.

I'M HAPPY ABOUT LAST NIGHT.

IT REALLY IS FUN WORKING ON A PROJECT WITH YOU.

I'VE LEARNED THAT ALL OVER AGAIN.

I HAVE MOCK EXAMS IN THE AFTER-NOON.

AND I HAVE A MEETING BEFORE THAT.

BUT YOU WERE UP ALL NIGHT WORKING .....

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF CREATORS...

...TOMOYA AKI-KUN.

I KNOW YOU CAN DO THIS.

YOUR ENTHUSIASM GOT ME SERIOUS ABOUT THIS TOO AFTER ALL.

WE GOT THIS.

LET'S WORK OURSELVES TO THE BONE, OKAY?

...YOU BET!

TWO WEEKS LATER

...GETS ME ALL WORKED UP!

JUST IMAGINING IT.....

AHHH...!

THIS PLOT'S THE BEST...!

THANK YOOOU, UTAHA-SENPAI!

THE PROBLEM NOW'S THE CHARACTER DESIGN, HUH?

HMMM.

SUMMER VACATION STARTS TOMORROW, AND IF I DON'T SORT OUT A CLUBROOM, ERIRI WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ANY WORK DONE...

OH! MORNING, AKI-KUN!

HI, KA—

BAN (BAM)

TOUUUUUU!?

?

BISHII (JAB)

OBJEC-TION!

WE ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE CHARACTER WOULD HAVE A SHORT BOB!

WHY DID YOU CHANGE YOUR HAIR NOW!?

YOU MEAN I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE AN OPENING STATEMENT AT THIS MOCK TRIAL THAT RANDOMLY UNFOLDED BEFORE MY EYES...?

SAY WHAT ...?

DOES THE ACCUSED HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY FOR HERSELF?

THE ACCUSED WILL REFRAIN FROM MAKING META OUT-BURSTS!

AKI-KUN, YOUR CHAR-ACTER'S EVEN LESS ESTAB-LISHED THAN MINE.

THE DEFEN-DANT MUST CLEARLY UNDER-STAND HER POSITION.

THAT'S PROB-LEMATIC... WE CAN'T HAVE A HEARING LIKE THIS.

YOUR HONOR, IT APPEARS THIS CHILD STILL HAS NO IDEA WHAT SHE'S DONE.

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME, HM?

OH, UM, I'M SORRY ABOUT THA—

YOU DECIDED TO INCREASE MY WORK-LOAD ON A WHIM!?

YOU FELT LIKE IIIT!?

HUH? UMM...

I WILL ASK YOU AGAIN! WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY CHANGE YOUR HAIR-STYLE!?

JUST FELT LIKE IT, I GUESS?

CHAR-ACTER DESIGN IS EASIER TO DO WITH MOTIFS .....

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WENT WITH THE PONYTAIL FOR SAWAMURA-SAN'S SAKE, DIDN'T YOU?

NAH, I WASN'T REALLY THINKING THAT HAR—

KOOOOO (RUMBLE)

ZC (CHIL)

.....DIDN'T YOU?

.....UH, MAYBE I DID.

OBJEC-TION! LEADING THE WIT-NESS!

NO FURTHER UNCALLED-FOR REMARKS PLEASE, UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA!

BUT AS HER COUNSEL, IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR ME TO CHIME IN, RIGHT?

YOU'RE ONLY SAYING THAT 'COS YOU THINK IT'S FUN TRYING TO GET A RISE OUTTA ME, RIGHT!?

UGH, ENOUGH! ORDER IN THE COURT!

SO NOW WHAT .....?

WE'LL NEVER REACH A VERDICT LIKE THIS, YOU KNOW?

...

WHY DON'T YOU JUST PASS DOWN A JUDGMENT BASED ON YOUR OWN OPINION, YOUR HONOR?

UM, WHAT I MEAN IS...

HUH .....?

?

...BOILS DOWN TO WHETHER OR NOT IT SUITS ME, RIGHT?

...THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THIS STYLE IS GUILTY OR INNOCENT...

HUH!?

WHAAAT!?

I SEE. SHE HAS A POINT .....

I AGREE TO THE ACCUSED'S PROPOSAL.

HOLD UP, YOU GUYS!

I HAVE NO OBJECTIONS.

"DO YOU THINK THIS HAIR LOOKS GOOD ON ME, AKI-KUN?"

IN OTHER WORDS, I NEED TO EXPRESS HOW I FEEL ABOUT KATOU'S HAIRSTYLE.

THE POINT OF CONTENTION IS WHETHER OR NOT THE HAIRSTYLE SUITS HER.

I, THE JUDGE, AM THE ONE WHO HANDS DOWN THE VERDICT.

ACK!!

JJJJJJ! (STARE)

...

KA-KATOU ...?

SORRY, THIS IS WHERE I CALL FOR A MISTRIAL, MMKAY?

THAT IT IS!

WHEW, FIRST TERM'S OVER!

WHAT ABOUT OUR USUAL CAFE? WE CAN HAVE TEA WHILE WE WORK.

MY WALLET COULDN'T HANDLE IT.

BESIDES, THERE'S COMIKET TO THINK ABOUT IN AUGUST.

SASA (SWISH)

SASA

NO.

DID YOU NOT GET AN OKAY TO USE THE AV ROOM?

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES!

WHAT DO I DO ABOLT A CLLBROOM OVER BREAK?

GOOD BYE SAWAMURA SAN!

OH, HEY! KATOU, SINCE I'M GOING ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH.....?

TOMOYA-SENPA! .....?

YEAH, IT'S A DOUJINSHI SALES FAIR.

"COMI-KET"?

I'M BACK ...!

IT IS YOU, TOMOYA-SENPAI!

I'VE COME BACK TO YOU, SENPAI!

I FINALLY FOUND YOU!

SAY WHAT!?

OOH! FOUND A BALL!

SENPAI! SENPAI!

C'MON, TOMOYA-SENPAI! PLAY WITH ME!

BURUN (BOUNCE)

BARUN (JIGGLE)

UH, WELL .....

SHE'S A KOUHAI OF YOURS FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL, AKI-KUN?

NOT QUITE, BUT KINDA, YEAH.

HER NAME'S IZUMI HASHIMA.

SEEMS LIKE YOU KNOW LOTS ABOUT HER.....

KARI (SCRITCH)

KARI

KARI

AS IF. WE D.DN'T GO TO THE SAME ELEMEN-TARY SCHOOL, AND SHE'S TWO YEARS LOWER.

AND SHE MOVED AWAY TO NAGOYA BEFORE MIDDLE SCHOOL.

MIIN

MIIN (BUZZ)

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT HER, SAWAMURA-SAN?

MIIN

COINCI-DENCE.

INCIDEN-TALLY, WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?

YEAH, I WAS A TOTAL TOMBOY BACK THEN, HUH?

YEAH, EXACTLY!

WELL, YOU USED TO HAVE SHORT HAIR, AND YOU WERE ALWAYS CRAZY-TAN FROM BEING OUT IN THE SUN.

ANYWAY, YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED, IZUMI-CHAN.

HUH!? YOU THINK!?

IZUMI WAS ONLY THE SECOND FEMALE FRIEND I'D EVER HAD IN MY LIFE.

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HER IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY THAN I HAD WITH THE GIRLIE ERIRI.....

...UH, YEAH.

HM?

DID I GET A BIT MORE LADY-LIKE?

MUN

MUN

HUH!?

YOU TAUGHT ME THE PLEASURES OF BEING A WOMAN .....

...DIDN'T YOU?

BUT IF THAT'S TRUE .....

...IF I'M A REAL GIRL NOW .....

...IT WAS YOUR DOING, SENPAI.

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE...

...YOU HAD ALL KINDS OF FUN WITH ME HERE, REMEMBER?

IZUMI-CHAN?

SHADY FUN IN THE PARK WITH A LITTLE GIRL .....

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, RINRI-KUN .....? WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE .....!?

GIRI (GRIND)...

GIRI

GIRI

THIS IS MY FIRST TIME SEEING KATOU RECOIL LIKE THAT!

GEH ...!

A-AKI-KUN ...?

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN .....

I KNEW IT WAS YOU RIGHT AWAY. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....

R-R-REALLY ?

GARI (SCRAPE)

GARI

GARI

AHA..... NOW WE KNOW WHY HE DOESN'T CONSIDER OLD LADIES LIKE YOU DATING MATERIAL, HUH...

..UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA?

SO, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....

GOSO (DIG)

...PLEASE ACCEPT THIS!

I-IZUMI-CHAN .....!?

DON'T TELL ME THIS IS...

...A LOVE LETTER OF THE SORT THAT BREAKS OUT INTO AN ALTERNATE ROUTE!?

Saturday East Hall HO-04a (XXXX XXXX) Izumi Hashima

Fancy Wave

Comic☆Market 8X Exhibitor Pass

Valid: August 1X, 201X (Saturday) 7:30 A.M. — 9 A.M.

DAY TWO, EAST HALL, HO-04A, "FANCY WAVE"?

.....

LEMME GUESS— YOU THOUGHT ANOTHER ROUTE HAD OPENED UP?

TOO BAD!

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE GAVE ME A COMIKET CIRCLE TICKET AS A PRESENT!

NO, IT'S AN OTOME GAME. FOR GIRLS.

?

Y'KNOW, KATOU, I WOULDN'T TALK ABOUT IT SO CASUALLY IF I WERE YOU—

HEY, AKI-KUN.

IS *LITTLE* YADDA YADDA ANOTHER DATING SIM FOR GUYS?

HER WORK'S BASED ON LITTLE LOVE RHAPSODY, *HUH.....?*

IT'S NOT "YADDA YADDA"! IT'S *LITTLE LOVE RHAP-SODY!*

LITTLE! LOVE! RHAP-SODY!!

IT ALSO GOES BY *LIT-RHAP* OR *LLR.*

IT'S A POPULAR SERIES THAT'S SOLD MORE THAN TWO MILLION UNITS THUS FAR OVER THREE INSTALLMENTS, SO PLEASE DON'T SCREW UP THE TITLE!

—'COS IT'LL STIR UP TROUBLE JUST LIKE THAT.

Y-YEAH, I LEARNED MY LESSON. JUST NOW.

...

ALL I EVER DID WAS PLAY OUTSIDE WITH THE BOYS WHEN I WAS LITTLE, BUT SENPAI INTRODUCED ME TO A WHOLE NEW WORLD.....

HE GAVE ME *LITRHAP 2* AND A PSP FOR MY BIRTHDAY!

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR SENPAI, I WOULDN'T BE LIVING THIS BLISSFUL LIFE STEEPED IN GAMES AND ANIME RIGHT NOW.....

YIKES! WITH THAT HORRIBLE FACE SHE'S MAKING, YOU'D THINK SHE WAS TALKING TO SOME KINDA RELIGIOUS ZEALOT.

WOW..... AND IT SEEMS YOU TOTALLY DON'T REGRET ANY OF IT.

SO I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T THANK HIM ENOUGH!

PRETTY PLEASE!

SO, SENPAI! SUMMER COMIKET!

PLEASE!

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IZUMI-CHAN'S LATEST.

PRETTY, PRETTY PLEASE WITH A CHERRY ON TOP! YOU HAVE TO COME!

ZEEE (WHEEZE)
ZEEE
ZEEE
HEY! WHY THE HELL DID YOU LEAVE ME BEHIND!?
THAT KINDA THOUGHTLESSNESS IS WHY THE SOCIAL STANDING OF OTAKU NEVER IMPROVES!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT DISRESPECTFUL ATTITUDE CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIETY'S LOW OPINION OF OTAKU!?
IT'S NOTHING
WHY ARE YOU SO MAD?
SO WHICH IS IT!?
AND I HATE IT WHEN YOU CONVENIENTLY EXPLAIN ME AWAY FOR YOUR OWN PEACE OF MIND LIKE THAT!
I SEE. WELL, THAT'S OKAY, THEN.
I SAID I'M NOT MAD! YOU'RE GETTING ME ALL WRONG 'COS YOU'RE TOO SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT THE WHOLE THING.
A FRIEND I HAVEN'T SEEN IN THREE YEARS IS BACK. ISN'T IT NATURAL FOR US TO HAVE A GOOD TALK?
LITRHAP IS, YOU KNOW .....
.....

TOMO-YA!

THAT'S THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT, RIGHT?

LITTLE LOVE RHAP-SODY IS A REGIS-TERED TRADE-MARK OF THE SONAR CORP.

I MEAN, IT'S .....!

.. IT'S FAMOUS AND?

YOU KNOW FULL WELL WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY HERE!

YOU KNOW .....

WAIT, AM I WRONG?

.....

WHY ARE YOU BEING LIKE THIS TO ME NOW .....?

LONG TIME NO SEE, YOU TWO.

!?

YOU.....

LONG TIME NO SEE, YOU TWO.

IT WASN'T SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU NEED TO REPEAT YOURSELF.

IORI HASHIMA.

IZUMI-CHAN'S BIOLOGICAL OLDER BROTHER.

OH YEAH, I THINK SHE SAID HE WAS COMING BACK TOO.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, IORI?

SINCE I'VE MOVED BACK TO TOKYO THIS MONTH, I JUST THOUGHT I'D SAY HI.

WHY'D YOU BOTHER COMING BACK? YOU COULD'VE STAYED AND HAD YOUR FILL OF NAGOYA CUISINE.

MUSTA BEEN TASTY, HUH?

THE THING THAT REALLY KILLED ME...

...WAS THAT THERE ARE NO MAJOR DOUJIN MARKETS IN NAGOYA LIKE THEY HAVE IN KANTO .....

!

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD MORE THAN YOUR FILL!

WELL, I TRIED PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING THEY'RE KNOWN FOR, BUT IF I WAS TO SHARE DETAILS ON HOW IT WAS LACKING, IT WOULD BE TOO LONG TO FIT INTO A WORD BALLOON.

IT'S NOT ACTUALLY THAT GREAT.

OH, BUT IT WAS NICE TO EASILY GET AHOLD OF BOOKS AND GAMES THERE THAT WOULD SELL OUT IN A FLASH ON RELEASE DAY IN AKIBA.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE STILL

THREE YEARS IN A PLACE WHERE I COULDN'T PUT MY TRUE TALENTS TO USE WAS HELL.

AND SO, I'M FINALLY MAKING MY LONG-OVERDUE, TRIUMPHANT RETURN .....

...TO SUMMER COMIKET!

!!

YOU .....

YOU REALLY GOT YOUR FILL AND THEN SOME, HUH?

I RAKED IT IN RESELLING THEM.

YOU'RE PART OF A CIRCLE TOO!?

SURE AM.

I JUST CAN'T WAIT TO SEE ALL THE BUSINESS CARDS AND E-MAIL ADDRESS-ES...

...AND MERCH AND BOOKS I SCORE, AND HOW MUCH MONEY I'M GONNA MAKE.

HEH...

IORI..... SO YOU ARE STILL UP TO NO GOOD .....!

GI (GRIT)

END

YOU'RE STILL UP TO YOUR OLD TRICKS.

YUP. THE BIGGER THE EVENT... AND THE MORE FAMOUS THE CREATORS THERE, THE MORE IORI'S TALENT SHINES.

YOU KNOW, THIS IS THE THING I NEVER LIKED ABOUT YOU!

WHAT REASON WOULD I HAVE TO STOP?

WE MET IN THE SPRING OF MY FIRST YEAR IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

HE'S A VULTURE— A DOUJIN EXPLOITER.

IORI HASHIMA..... IN REALITY, HE SURPASSES ME AS AN OTAKU. BUT HE'S THE ANTITHESIS OF ALL THE IDEALS I HOLD DEAR.....

HIS DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE AMOUNT OF STUFF HE OWNED WAS INCREDIBLE. EVEN A GROWN-UP COULDN'T HAVE BEAT HIM.

AT THE TIME, IORI WAS ALREADY A HARD-CORE ELITE OTAKU.

WE SENSED THAT WE WERE KINDRED SPIRITS, AND WITHIN TEN OR SO MINUTES OF TALKING, WE BECAME FAST FRIENDS.

AND THEN, ABOUT A YEAR LATER, I STARTED KEEPING MY DISTANCE 'COS I'D RECOGNIZED HIS TRUE NATURE.

HE GOT CHUMMY WITH A LOT OF MAJOR DOUJINSHI CREATORS, OF COURSE, BUT HE ALSO BECAME FRIENDS WITH A NUMBER OF BIGWIGS IN ALL DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE PRO SIDE TOO.

WHAT'S MORE, HIS INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS WERE PRETTY SPECIAL. HE WOULD TALK TO ARTISTS HE'D NEVER MET BEFORE AND ENDEAR HIMSELF TO THEM.

IT REALLY IS TOO BAD. WITH MY NEGOTIATION SKILLS, CONTACTS, AND DIPLOMACY, AND YOUR IDEAS, PASSION, AND INVOLVE-MENT...

TOMOYA-KUN, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE STILL SAYING SUCH NAIVE THINGS.

IMPROVING HIS OWN STANDING IS WHAT IORI IS REALLY ALL ABOUT.

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, JOIN THE COMIKET PLANNING COMMIT-TEE.

...I THINK WE COULD TAKE OVER THE WORLD OF DOUJIN SOMEDAY.

.....

GET A LOAD OF THAT AMAZING INFO-GATHERING PROWESS.....!

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

!

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR DOUJIN GAME CIRCLE, BY THE WAY.....

YOU'VE GOT A PRACTICALLY PRO ARTIST AND WRITER ON BOARD. I CALL THAT CHEATING.

YES.

I WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THAT OFFER TO YOUR PSEUDONYM, KASHIWAGI-SENSEI.

ERIRI?

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE...

HASHIMA.....

ROUGE EN ROUGE!

WHA—!?

..."ROUGE EN ROUGE" MADE HER AN OFFER TOO.

...SHE MIGHT BE YOUR CIRCLE'S ARTIST, BUT MY CIRCLE...

SEE, TOMOYA-KUN...

CHAPTER
13

It's nice out today. Wanna go do something fun?

Hey there, Megumi!

EEP!

THIS *LITRHAP* GAME IS KIND OF EMBARRASSING!

SO IZUMI-CHAN LIKES THESE KINDS OF GAMES, HUH?

AND WHY'RE YOU PLAYING UNDER YOUR OWN NAME ANYWAY!?

'SUP, MEGUMI!?

WELL, I COULDN'T HELP IT. SHE MADE IT SOUND SO FUN, JUST LIKE YOU DO, AKI-KUN.

WHAT? GIVING UP ALREADY?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO TRY IT!

IEE

IEE, WHEEZE.

I'M SORRY, KATOU-SAN.

I WORKED HARD ALL NIGHT, BUT I'M STILL BEHIND SCHEDULE .....

OH, I'M NOT BOTH-ERED.

..... THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS GAME, YOU KNOW.

OH, I'VE ALREADY GOTTEN ASKED OUT.

EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID OKAY TO GOING OUT FOR TEA RIGHT AFTER OUR FIRST CHAT?

OH YEAH?

YES, THAT'S TRUE...

...BUT I GUESS I'M NOT USED TO IT.

GOT IT! I'M GIVING THESE FIN-ISHED PAGES BACK TO YOU! PLEASE GIVE THEM A FINAL CHECK!

SHUBA (SWISH)

TO-MOYA! I'M DONE INKING THE LAST PAGE! SCAN IT!

.....GOSH, AKI-KUN, YOU'RE PLAYING ASSISTANT LIKE IT'S THE MOST NATURAL THING!

SHUBI (ZWIP)

OHHH! NO, NO! MY HANDS ARE BUSY, SEE!?

OH, HANG ON. THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO TALK GAMES, IS IT, AKI-KUN?

I PLAYED THROUGH THE GAL GAME LIKE I WAS MAKING FRIENDS, BUT WITH THIS, IT'S HARD TO SHAKE THE AWARENESS OF THEM BEING THE OPPOSITE SEX.

SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME AS A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITE SEX?

HUH!?

Megumi... listen.

There's something I have to tell you right now.

SA..... SAWA-MURA-SAN, WHAT WOULD YOU PICK?

ACCEPT? DECLINE?

DON'T ASK ME, "MEGUMI"!

WH-WH-WHAT DO I DO, AKI-KUN .....? WHAT DO I SAY BACK!?

If the answer is "okay," then flash me that amazing smile of yours.

And if it's "no," then please say you couldn't hear me over the sound of the fireworks.

BUT..... THIS IS SERIOUS, YOU KNOW? I THINK HE MEANS IT, DON'T YOU?

AGH!

SAWA-MURA-SAN?

HEY .....

HUH?

HUH?

O-OH YEAH! KATOU-SAN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME SEE THE FIREWORKS FROM MY HOUSE NEXT MONTH?

MY WARD'S HAVING ITS FIREWORKS FESTIVAL! IT'S ON THE SAME DAY AS THE FINAL DAY OF SUMMER COMIKET.

AWW, GEEZ! ERR, IT'S THE FIRE-WORKS!

THEY'RE TOO DAZZLING! TALK ABOUT OVER-PRODUCED, AM I RIGHT!?

SHE'S NOT ANGRY...

WHAT THE—? THIS IS TOTALLY UNNATURAL FOR ERIRI .....

WOW! THAT SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

EVERY YEAR, OUR FRIENDS GET TOGETHER AND HAVE A BLAST WATCHING THE SHOW!

OUR BALCONY'S LIKE HAVING BOX SEATS!

I RE-SPECT-FULLY DECLINE!

WELL..... AMBASSA-DORS AND FOREIGN AFFA.RS MINISTERS AND STUFF...

UH, ERIRI, WHO ARE THESE "FRIENDS"?

KACHI KACHI

KACHI

KACHI (CLICK)

SHAAAAAA (FWSSSH)

UM..... SO.....

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT THAT INVITE FROM ROUGE EN ROUGE?

WHAT?

.....

H—

HEY ...

ALMOST EVERYONE ATTENDING COMIKET KNOWS WHO THEY ARE.

THE CIRCLE ROUGE EN ROUGE.

.....I BET.

IT'S AN ATTRACTIVE OFFER.

I'D PROBABLY SELL DOUBLE WHAT I AM NOW, AND RUMOR HAS IT THEY EVEN ASSIGN YOU AN ASSISTANT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IORI'S REPPING THE CIRCLE NOW.

WELL, I TOOK OVER FROM THE ORIGINAL LEADER, SO I'VE GOT IT PRETTY EASY AS THE SECOND HEAD.

YEAH, I'M IN CHARGE OF IT NOW.

FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, THEY'VE NEVER ONCE LOST OUT ON THE SWEET SPOT RIGHT BY THE ENTRANCE.

THESE DAYS, THEY'RE A GIGANTIC ORGANIZATION THAT YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL A BUSINESS ENTERPRISE.

SHE'S A POWERFUL, MEGA-BESTSELLING MANGA-KA WITH SEVERAL SERIES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE INTO ANIME AND WHOSE EVERY VOLUME ENDS UP A BIG HIT.

AND COUNTLESS TIMES, SHE'S OFFERED STORIES TO OTHER ARTISTS AND TURNED THEM INTO HITS TOO.

AKANE KOUSAKA, THE FOUNDER OF IORI'S CIRCLE.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, IF AKANE KOUSAKA LIKES YOU, YOUR SUCCESS IN THE PRO INDUSTRY'S PRACTICALLY A GIVEN.

KACHI (CLICK)

KACHI KACHI

WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT..... WHAT COULD I..... EVER DO FOR ERIRI .....?

...AND ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE ARE ALUMS OF ROUGE EN ROUGE.

TO THIS DAY, THERE'RE A WHOLE BUNCH OF ARTISTS WHO GOT BIG THAT WAY AND HAVE HER TO THANK FOR THEIR SUCCESS...

AND DONNNE ~!

FOR AMPLE, WHAT OULD U SAY ARE YOUR DEAL PTIONS .....?

FOR YOU..... MAYBE THAT KIND OF...

HEY ..... WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NEXT, ERIRI?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NEXT" .....?

HM?

.....TOMO-YA.

HUH?

WHAT?

FASA (SWISH)

THAT DOES IT FOR MY SUMMER COMIKET PAGES ~!

NOW TO START ON THE KEY VISUALS RIGHT AWAY!

OH .....

...AND THAT'S NOT EVEN FOR MY OWN CIRCLE.

'COS I'VE GOT NOTHING ELSE LINED UP UNTIL WINTER COMIKET THIS YEAR...

HUH? WHY NOT?

I'M JUST GONNA PUT THIS OUT THERE, BUT...

...I'M NOT SIGNED UP FOR A SINGLE EVENT AFTER SUMMER COMIKET, OKAY?

GOT THAT?

AND OF COURSE, IT'S NOT FOR ROUGE EN ROUGE EITHER!

CAN YOU MAKE THE MOST OF MY TALENTS, TOMOYA?

CAN YOU KEEP UP WITH ME?

OH...

NOT AS MUCH AS YOU!

HMPH!

OVER-CONFI-DENT AS USUAL.

GATA (CLACK)

SURE I CAN .....!

WATCH IT! IF IORI HEARD THAT, HE'D ACTUALLY BRING HER HERE!

BESIDES, IF I'M GONNA GET LURED AWAY, IT'S NOT GONNA BE BY HASHIMA.

NOW, IF THE PROPOSAL HAD COME DIRECTLY FROM AKANE KOUSAKA HERSELF, THAT'D BE A DIFFERENT STORY.

HA-HA! HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!

YOU'RE AWFUL~! AND YOU USED TO BE HIS CLASS-MATE TOO~!

DO (BURST)

AH HA HA HA!

YEAH, I TOTALLY WOULDN'T PUT IT PAST HIM!

BUT JUST FOR A YEAR ~!

YEAH, BUT YOU WERE FRIENDS WITH HIM ~!

RIGHT AFTER THAT, SHE GOT TO WORK ON MEGUMI'S DESIGN, AND OUR CIRCLE ACTIVITIES STARTED BACK UP IN EARNEST.

HA HA HA HA!

HEE!

HA HA!

AH HA HA HA HA!

WE MANAGED TO GET ERIRI'S SUMMER COMIKET PAGES TO THE PRINTER WITHOUT INCIDENT.

ERIRI WAS ODDLY HYPED UP.....

C'MON! NOW LIE DOWN ON THE BED!

I'M GETTING INTO THIS!

YOU'RE TOO INTO IT!

AWW, NOOO! MORE LIKE THIS! SPREAD YOUR LEGS AND GIVE ME A POSTCOITAL LOOK!

GEEZ, CALM DOWN, ERIRI!

AKI-KUN, HELP MEEE!

AS SOON AS SUMMER VACATION STARTED, I TOOK ON STILL MORE PART-TIME WORK, BUT..!

...I NEEDED TO RAISE FUNDS FOR WINTER COMIKET, AND I WAS SADLY COMPELLED TO PIN DOWN A STUDIO SPACE.

IF I DO ANOTHER HOUR OF OVERTIME, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO AFFORD CLEAR FILES AT LEAST!

GOSHI SCRUB)

SHI

SHI

SHI

I STROVE TO AVOID LOOKING AT THE..... URGH..... COMIKET INFO PAGE ON THE WEB 'COS I KNEW IT'D KILL ME.....

ON OPENING DAY, I COLLECTED ALL THE FREEBIES THE EXHIBITORS WERE HANDING OUT TO..... WAAH!..... SATE MY GREED.....

THEN COMIKET DAY TWO ARRIVED.

THE DAY IZUMI WAS TABLING.

SENPAI, YOU CAME!

WELL, YOU GAVE ME A TICKET, SO THAT MAKES ME A MEMBER OF YOUR CIRCLE.

UMM, THAT'S GOING TO GET SOME AWKWARD REACTIONS OUT OF PEOPLE, SO PLEASE CALL ME BY MY NAME.

HRRN, SO THAT'S YOUR TAKE...

OH, UMM...

AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND TOO! THANK YOU FOR COMING!

Y-YES, MEGUMI-SAN!

I'M MEGU-MI.

COULD YOU CALL ME THAT?

AND NOW THIS...

.....HMM...

Y-YES! UNDER-STOOD, KAMO-SAN!

"KAMO MEGUMI" - KAMOME GUMI. THE KAMOME GROUP...?

OH, NO! I'LL BE FINE!

IF I CAN HELP IN ANY WAY, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

WELL, WANNA START SETTING UP!?

JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU NEED DONE!

ALL SET UP!

THERE!

THIRTY SECONDS!

110

TEKIPAKI (BRISK)

SA (SHP)

SA

SA

¥5

SINCE *LITRHAP 3*'S RELEASE, I'VE MANAGED TO SELL FIFTY COPIES OF MY WORK.

HOW ABOUT A SALES-PERSON, THEN?

OHH! I'M FINE BY MYSELF.

WELL, THAT'S PRETTY TYPICAL. I KNOW OVER 90 PERCENT OF THE CIRCLES HERE FEEL THE SAME.

I..... SEE.

IT COSTS ALMOST THE SAME TO PRINT A HUNDRED AS IT DOES FIFTY, SO I WENT FOR IT.

BUT THIS TIME, I GOT CARRIED AWAY AND PRINTED A HUNDRED COPIES .....

BUT...

...THERE'S SOMETHING HERE THAT'S FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SALES.

HUH?

BUT WITH IORI'S..... THAT IS, IZUMI'S BROTHER'S CIRCLE...

...EVEN IF THEIR SALES ARE CRAP, THEY COULD STILL SELL A HUNDRED TIMES WHAT'S STACKED HERE.

CONSIDERING THAT.....

THE PEOPLE WHO DROP BY MY TABLE...

...ALL REALLY LOVE TO CHAT!

LIT-RHAP HAS A LOT OF HARD-CORE FANS!

I END UP TALKING TO EACH PERSON WHO COMES BY FOR AROUND THIRTY MINUTES!

WHAT'S MORE, OTHER PEOPLE GET PULLED INTO THE CONVERSA-TION, AND MEMBERS OF THE C RCLES W TH NE GHBORING TABLES JOIN IN TOO.

THE AREA AROUND MY TABLE TOTALLY TURNS INTO A TEA PARTY!

IT'S LOTS OF FUN, AND IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY!

OH..... GUESS SO.

OKAY!

HEY, IORI..... UNLIKE YOU, YOUR KID SISTER'S GROWING UP A STRAIGHT-FORWARD OTAKU!

OH, NO! THEY'RE NOT MY FANS— THEY'RE FANS OF *LIT-RHAP!*

OHHH! YOU'RE AMAZING, IZUMI-CHAN!

YOU'VE GOT SUCH GREAT FANS!

...YOU'RE HERE TOO, SENPAI .....

GUSU (SNIFF)

AND THIS TIME .....

HUUUH!?

I'M SO HAPPY!

WAAAAH!

I'M JUST A FRIEND'S LITTLE SISTER ...

...BUT YOU CAME TO MY TABLE TODAY!

HEY, DON'T DUMP THIS ON ME!

RIGHT?

SHE GAVE ME THE TICKET!

UH, UMM, BUT I'M HERE 'COS YOU...

SO, SENPAI... PLEASE STAY HERE WITH ME, OKAY?

PLEASE SPEND TODAY READING MY BOOK, AND TALKING TO ME, AND SMILING AT ME, AND WATCHING OVER ME!

YEAH, SURE. ...OKAY.

.....GEEZ, THE WATER-WORKS!

UM, SHE MISTOOK ME FOR YOUR GIRL-FRIEND BEFORE, RIGHT?

SO WHAT'S UP WITH THIS?

JUST THE USUAL FEELINGS OF AF-FECTION TOWARD A SENPAI, I'D SAY.

BUT YOU AND THE WORDS "BELOVED SENPAI" GO TO-GETHER LIKE OIL AND WATER, AKI-KUN.

ARE YOU LOOKIN' FOR A FIGHT? HUH!?

OOH..... UM, IT'S A VERY SIMPLE BOOK, ISN'T IT?

GAYA わ!! や

GAYA わ!! や

GAYA (BUZZ) わ!! や

ABOUT TEN MINUTES TILL DOORS, HUH .....

YOU CAN JUST APOLO-GIZE FOR STUFF LIKE THAT WITH A LINE IN THE AFTER-WORD.

AND I'M DOUBLY SORRY THAT IT TURNED INTO A BOOK OF PENCIL SKETCHES HALFWAY THROUGH .....

I SAY THAT, BUT .....

I'M SORRY THE COVER'S ALL WHITE .....

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO DRAW IT.

NO, IT'S PLEASANT.

FancyWave Vol.6

IT'S SO COMPLICATED WITH ALL THESE LINES, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH ONES I SHOULD BE LOOKING AT.....

SAVE HER FROM ME, THE SPITEFUL GOD .....!

HELP ME, MIKIYA!

THE BLACK LEVELS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE EARLIER PAGES.

IT'S TRUE.....THE CHARACTERS, THE BACK-GROUNDS, THEY'RE ALL A MESS OF PENCIL.

YOU CAN'T DO THAT .....!

THEN THE LEVEL OF COMPLE-TION DROPS ALL OF A SUDDE—

.....

HUH?

PERA

PERA

PERA

UP TO THIS POINT, SHE REALLY DID HER BEST TO FINISH THE BACK-GROUNDS AND EVERY-THING.

PERA (FLIP)

IZUMI-CHAN!

HUH!? REALLY?

THEN YOU'RE A LIT-RHAP-PER TOO!

YOU KNOW, I PLAYED THIS GAME RECENTLY MYSELF.

AT AKI-KUN'S HOUSE.

?

WHAT IS IT, TOMOYA-SENPAI .....?

IZUMI-CHAN.

THIS BOOK.

YOU DON'T MIND SELLING OUT OF IT, DO YOU?

.....HUH?

END

CHAPTER 14

IZUMI-CHAN. IS IT MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU TO TALK TO FELLOW FANS THAN TO SELL YOUR BOOK?

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE POPU-LAR?

.....OR MAYBE YOU LIKE NOT SELLING?

NO DOUJIN ARTIST OUT THERE WOULD SAY THEY DON'T CARE IF THEY DON'T SELL! GOSH, SENPAI!

..... AH HA HA!

NOOO WAY!

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, HAVING FUN IS THE BEST PART.

SO..... YOU'RE COOL WITH SELLING A LOT?

HUH?

SORRY! I'VE GOT TO TAKE OFF FOR A BIT!

PROMISE I'LL BE BACK BEFORE CLOSING TIME!

ALL RIGHT .....

BUT I GUESS THAT'S ALSO PARTLY AN EXCUSE FOR NOT SELLING MUCH, SO.....

AH HA HA!

SORRY-YYYY!

NO RUN-NING ~!

S-SENPAI!?

THREE HOURS LATER

YES. YOU'RE RIGHT .....

NOT MANY PEOPLE COMING BY THE TABLE ANYMORE, HUH?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

AND HERE'S YOUR ¥500 CHANGE.

AREN'T YOU WOR-RIED?

BUT EXACTLY WHERE, I CAN'T SAY.

DUNNO? OUT, MOST LIKELY.

OH! ARE YOU KINDA MAD AT HIM?

NOT LIKE HE WORRIES ABOUT ME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHERE DO YOU THINK TOMOYA-SENPAI WENT?

..... UM... ... MEGUMI-SAN?

UH, THAT'S NOT IT.

I KNOW BECAUSE I HAVE NO FAITH IN HIM AT ALL.

WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MUCH FAITH IN HIM?

.....HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

WELL, IN ANY CASE, I THINK HE'LL BE BACK SOON.

YOU'RE THE ONE HE'S GIVING HIS ALL FOR RIGHT NOW, IZUMI-CHAN.

I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO HIS CELL

UMM .....

MEGUMI-SAN..... ARE YOU ACTUALLY TOMOYA-SENPAI'S GIRL-FRIEND?

NO, I'M HIS MAIN HEROINE.

..... WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

ZA (STEP)

I REALLY WISH I KNEW.

SORRY I'M SO LATE!

WELCOME BACK.

SAY, KATOU, ARE YOU GOOD AT ARTS AND CRAFTS?

THANKS!

HFF!

HFF!

S-SENPAI .....!?

SORRY TO ASK, BUT YOU MIND HELPING ME OUT, THEN?

UH, JUST OKAY.

SELLING BOOKS, OF COURSE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

ER, WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS .....?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

PLEASE STEP RIIIGHT UP AND HAVE A LOOK!

ZAWA (MURMUR)

IT'S A *LITRHAP 3* BOOK!

ZAWA

ZAWA

EXCUSE ME. ONE, PLEASE.

THANK YOU SOOO MUCH!

WE SOLD ONE AGAIN ..... BUT WHY .....?

SIGN: HO-OAA • FANCY WAVE

AND WHAT'S WITH THAT SIGN!?

IT'S JUST MY UNFINISHED PAGES!

"UNFIN-ISHED"?

IT'S AMAZING, RIGHT KATOU?

YEAH. I'M IMPRESSED YOU WERE ABLE TO PRINT SUCH A DETAILED COPY.

NO, SEE, THAT'S NOT WHAT I—

THAT WAS A JOKE.

MEGUMI-SAN .....?

RIGHT!?

YES. THE PAGES IN THIS PART ARE THE MOST AMAZING OF THEM ALL.

IF PEOPLE READ THIS MUCH OF THE FABULOUS LAST HALF, THEY CAN'T WALK AWAY EMPTY-HANDED!

IN FACT, THE PERSON WHO BOUGHT ONE JUST NOW WAS SIMPLY WALKING PAST, SAW THIS SIGN, AND THEN STOPPED.

YES!

IZUMI-CHAN HAS THE POWER TO SELL REGARD-LESS OF GENRE.

SIGN: HO-OAA • FANCY WAVE

SENPAI... WHY A LIMIT .....?

TAKE A LOOK.

AWW, SHOULDA KNOWN! OKAY, TWO THEN.

さっ SASA (SWISH)

SORRY, TWO'S THE LIMIT!

HUH!?

HUH .....? FOUR COPIES? YOU WANT THAT MANY?

GAYA
GAYA
GAYA
GAYA (BUZZ)
!
ONE, PLEASE!
C-CER-TAINLY!
DON'T CROWD THE AISLE! TWO LINES, PLEASE!
I'LL TAKE TWO!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

I'M REALLY SORRY, BUT WE'RE ALL SOLD OUT!

THANK YOU...

...SO, SO...

...SO VERY MUCH!

PUSHI (PSSHT)

UGH.

WARM .....

AS ARE ALL VENDING MACHINE DRINKS THIS TIME OF YEAR...

AND NOT JUST 'COS OF SUMMER COMIKET.

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE I FELT THIS THRILLED AFTER READING A DOUJINSHI .....?

FancyWave Vol.6

YOU SHOULD'VE MINDED YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

.....

WHEW.

TODAY WAS SO INTENSE .....

ANOTHER TWO OR THREE YEARS, AT LEAST.

I'D HOPED TO LEAVE IZUMI TO HER CAREFREE WAYS FOR A WHILE LONGER.

IORI..... SO YOU'RE HERE TOO.

.....!

THAT'S WHY I WAS TRYING TO GET SOMEONE TO HOLD HER SPOT.

WERE YOU GONNA WAIT FOR THE RIGHT TIME AND HAVE HER MAKE A DAZZLING DEBUT WITH ROUGE EN ROUGE?

WELL, YEAH. SHE'S STILL IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

I'M NOT TREATING HER LIGHTLY.

OF COURSE, BEING IN ROUGE EN ROUGE IS A GUARANTEED SHORTCUT TO BECOMING A POPULAR CREATOR.

"HOLD HER SPOT" .....? YOU MEAN—

SO THAT WOULD BE ERIRI'S POSITION .....?

I DO KNOW, BUT..... I DON'T WANT TO IMAGINE WHAT SHE'D THINK IF SHE HEARD THAT.

WELL .....

AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE TOO. YOU KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE, DON'T YOU?

ERI KASHIWAGI IS FULLY DEVELOPED.

ANYWAY, TOMORROW'S DAY THREE.

TIME FOR OUR SHOWDOWN AT LAST, HM, AKIKUN?

?

HUH?

WELL, ERIRI'S GONNA BEAT YOU.

NO WAY. WE'LL HAVE FAR MORE PRODUCT.

ERIRI SAID HER TABLE IS RIGHT NEXT TO IORI'S TOMORROW.

28

27

...OH, YEAH.

NOT IN SALES. WE'RE COMPETING WITH CONTENT.

WE WON'T HAVE TO, WILL WE?

SO HOW DO WE JUDGE THE WINNER?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

...WE'LL NEVER BACK DOWN.

NO MATTER THE DIFFERENCE IN SALES...

THAT'S RIGHT. EVEN IF YOU DON'T SELL, YOU CAN HAVE FUN. YOU CAN BE HAPPY.

I SPENT THE DAY WITH SOMEONE WHO REMINDED ME OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING...

...AN UNBREAKABLE SPIRIT AND BOTTOMLESS AMBITION.

SO I KNOW I CAN'T BE BEAT.

I'LL STILL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO TO-MORROW, IN ANY CASE.

HER BOOK THIS TIME TURNED OUT REAL NICE, Y'KNOW?

EVEN THOUGH IT'S IN THE RAPE GENRE.

NO DICE! YOU'RE UNDER-AGE!

DON'T YOU "HEH" ME!!

AND I WON'T TRADE FOR IT EITHER. YOU GOTTA LET ME BUY IT FOR REAL!

HEH!

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!

I'LL DEFINITELY HAVE TO PICK UP A COPY FOR MY-SELF!

GAYA

GAYA

GAYA (BUZZ)

BETTER GET BACK TO THE TABLE.

WHAT-EVER.

WASN'T EVEN SWEATING EVEN IN THIS HEAT!

SERI-OUSLY, WHY IS A PRETTY BOY LIKE THAT AN OTAKU .....?

AWWW, THERE, THERE.

LET'S CALM DOWN NOW, IZUMI-CHAN.

TOMOYA-SENPAIIIIII ~!

S-SENPAI .....

COSPLAY☆

YOU CAN SKIP THE ONE-LINERS, THANKS .....

THERE'RE PEOPLE HERE BOLDLY WALKING AROUND, DRESSED IN ALL KINDS OF CRAZY STUFF.

YOU SURE?

DAY TWO'S ALMOST OVER, YOU KNOW. YOU CAN'T GO OUTSIDE WITH THAT LOOK ON YOUR FACE, CAN YOU?

BUT! BUT! I NEVER IMAGINED THIS COULD HA— WAAAAH ~!

IN ALL THE TIME I'VE BEEN DOING DOUJIN, I'VE NEVER...

...BEEN THIS HAPPY .....!

TOMOYA .....?

IZUMI-CHAN .....

ERIRI?

NO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE .....?

?

OH? SAWA-MURA-SAN.

?

GATA (CLACK)

WOW! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING!

ARE YOU SAWA-MURA-SENPAI!?

I'M ... HELPING OUT IZUMI-CHAN HERE WITH HER CIRCLE.

I-I..... JUST WANTED TO CHECK OUT THE SETUP TODAY.

IZUMI...

...HA-SHIMA-SAN.

NOT ME .....

THE ONE WHO SOLD MY BOOKS WAS TOMOYA-SENPAI WITH HIS FIERCE DETERMI-NATION .....!

IZUMI-CHAN'S AWESOME, YOU KNOW!?

SHE SOLD OUT OF ALL HER BOOKS!

RIGHT. YOU TWO WERE GOING TO HELP HER.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT..... PLEASE TAKE THIS!

MY NEW BOOK I WAS SELLING TODAY!

.....

SO YOU'RE JUST GOING TO IGNORE MY HELP?

I WAS JUST GENER-ALIZING!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I'D LIKE YOU TO HAVE IT!

NO, NO, IT'S TOTALLY FINE..... YOU SOLD OUT, DIDN'T YOU?

THE FIRST .....

DOKUN (BADUM)

IT'S A BOOK TO REMEMBER.

THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK I'VE EVER SOLD OUT OF IN MY LIFE.....

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI (CLAP)

Thank you very much.

Comic☆ Market Day Two is now over.

...I STILL CAN'T ACCEPT IT.

..... BUT...

THANK YOU, IZUMI-SAN.

ERIRI ?

I'M SORRY ..... I'M REALLY SORRY.

HUH? WHY .....?

SORRY, KATOU! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

ERIRI, HEY!

LATER.

I HAVE TO GO CHECK OUT THE SETUP.....

DA (DASH)

HEY! HOLD ON!

ERIRI!

C'MON, ERIRI! PLEASE WAIT!

GA (GRAB)

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI (CLAP)

PACHI

110キ

HUH?

PACHI

PACHI

PACHI (CLAP)

PACHI

PACHI

YOU'RE THE WORST, TOMOYA.....

END

GOSHI (RUB)

WHAT'S WRO—?

ERIRI.

CHAPTER 15

.....I CAN'T.

COME BACK WITH ME AND APOLOGIZE TO IZUMI-CHAN, ALL RIGHT?

.....LET'S GO BACK, OKAY?

IZUMI-CHAN POURED HER HEART INTO IT—

BUT IT'S A GOOD BOOK, ISN'T IT?

I DON'T NEED THAT BOOK..... I DON'T WANT TO READ IT.....

WHY NOT?

I KNOW THAT!

HOW COULD I NOT .....?

I CAN TELL HOW MUCH WENT INTO THAT BOOK.

I KNOW HOW GREAT IT IS.

SO WHY DID YOU ACT THE WAY YOU DID .....?

IF I DIDN'T GIVE IT BACK..... I THINK I WOULD'VE RIPPED IT UP AND THROWN IT AWAY.

SO I GAVE IT BACK. AND THEN I RAN AWAY.

SHE'S SCARED .....?

WERE YOU ANXIOUS? ABOUT TOMORROW'S SHOWDOWN AND STUFF?

OR ABOUT BEING HEADHUNTED?

.....

IS IT MY FAULT?

.....

DID IT LOOK TO YOU LIKE I'M ON IORI'S SIDE?

I'M SORRY.

IF IT DID, THAT WAS CARELESS OF ME.

BUT IZUMI-CHAN'S CIRCLE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IORI'S .....

JARI (CRUNCH)

THAT'S NOT IT.

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT TOMORROW.

EGOISTIC LILY ISN'T THAT PUNY A CIRCLE.

NOW SHE'S..... ANNOYED .....?

SO, UM..... WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

WHAT'S SO AWFUL ABOUT THAT BOOK?

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT GOES ON IN THE MINDS OF CREATORS LIKE YOU!

IT'S 'COS I'VE..... NEVER SERIOUSLY CREATED ANYTHING MYSELF BEFORE.

I JUST DON'T GET WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD, ERIRI.....

WELL..... I'M JUST REPEATING MYSELF AGAIN, BUT...

...IT'S AWESOME. ESPECIALLY THE LAST HALF.

IT IS .....

.....WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU READ THAT BOOK?

IT'S LIKE SHE JUST DREW WHAT SHE WANTED TO DRAW, NO MORE, NO LESS.

THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID TOO.

IT'S JUST PENCILS, BUT THE DEEPER YOU GET INTO THE SECOND HALF, THE MORE PACKED IT GETS.

IT GETS MORE AND MORE DYNAMIC AS IT GOES ALONG.

THE FIRST THING THAT DRAWS PEOPLE'S EYES IS THE COVER.

BUT WITH A BOOK, YOU NEED TO CONSIDER THE ENTIRE PACKAGE.

WE SOMEHOW PULLED IT OFF TODAY, BUT I REALLY DOUBT IT'D BE LIKE THIS EVERY TIME.

YEAH.

BUT WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT, NO MATTER HOW AMAZING IT IS, IT WON'T SELL.

...SHE'D LEAVE ME IN THE DUST JUST LIKE THAT.....

IF THAT GIRL TEAMED UP WITH SOMEONE GOOD .....

SHE NEEDS SOMEONE TO MAKE HER UNDERSTAND THOSE THINGS! BUT THAT JERK, IORI.....GAH! HE PISSES ME OFF!

YEAH.

HANG ON A SEC.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF COMPARING?

YOU AND IZUMI-CHAN ARE IN TOTALLY DIFFERENT GENRES AT TOTALLY DIFFERENT LEVELS—

I'M SO AFRAID OF HAVING EVERYTHING TAKEN FROM ME!

UH, HOW COULD ANYTHING BE TAKEN FROM YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

CALM DOWN. WHY WORRY ABOUT SOMETHING SO FAR IN THE FUTURE?

ALL THAT'S CERTAIN IS THAT YOUR SKILL IS LEVELS ABOVE IZUMI-CHAN'S RIGHT NOW. WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

WHAT'S SCARY IS SCARY!

AM I MORE AMAZING THAN SHE IS?

HUH ...?

THEN LET ME ASK YOU THIS.

DO YOU FEEL A THRILL WHEN YOU LOOK AT MY ART?

DO YOU GET CHILLS DOWN YOUR SPINE?

IS MY BOOK MORE AWE-SOME THAN HER BOOK?

C'MON! ANSWER ME!

YOU'LL STILL SELL EVEN WITHOUT M—

WELL, I SAID THERE'S NO POINT COMPAR-ING.....

DO YOU FEEL DRIVEN TO SELL THEM YOURSELF?

THAT'S NO ANSWER AT ALL!

YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER ONCE THIS ENTIRE TIME, TOMOYA!

I COULDN'T LIE ABOUT A WORK LIKE THIS.....

THIS BOOK GOT TO ME MORE THAN ANY OTHER DOUJINSHI IN THE PAST YEAR.

BUT..... HOW COULD I?

YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER ONCE THIS ENTIRE TIME, TOMOYA!

MONYU (SQUISH)

もにゅ

?

GWAAAAH!!

UTAHA-SENPAI!?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE!?

NOW THEN, RINRI-KUN, LET'S HEAR EXACTLY WHAT HAP-PENED.

BUT WHY DO YOU NEED TO BE IN MY BED WITH ME!?

WHOA...

MOZO SQUIRM

BE A GOOD BOY, NOW.

WE CAN'T HAVE A NICE CHAT IF YOU'RE MAKING SUCH A FUSS, NOW CAN WE?

MOZO

MOZO

THAT'S EVERY-THING THAT'S GONE DOWN WITH ME AND ERIRI UP TO TODAY.

—AND THERE YOU HAVE IT.

I'M SAD. TO THINK I MISSED SUCH A JUICY EVENT!

SAWA-MURA-SAN'S WEEPY FACE .....

IT WOULD'VE BEEN AN IMAGE TO TREASURE FOREVER IN MY SAVED PHOTOS FOLDER!

ENOUGH ALREADY!

PLEASE STOP WITH THE WORST CHAR-ACTER AWARDS!

SO YOU THINK THE BLAME RESTS ENTIRELY AT THE FEET OF SAWAMURA-SAN, THEN? DO YOU THINK SHE IS QUALIFIED TO BE ONE OF THE BIG, THREE WORST GAL GAME HEROINES?

I DON'T THINK YOU'RE IN THE POSITION TO GO THAT FAR..

I SEE. YOU REALLY ARE WORTH-LESS, RINRI-KUN.

YOU COULD SHOOT TO BECOME ONE OF THE TOP THREE WORST GAL GAME HEROES EVER.

...WE'RE GONNA BE MAKING SOMETHING TOGETHER.

AFTER ALL...

IT'S OKAY IF I SPILL THE BEANS TO THESE TWO.

I'VE LET IT ALL OUT, EVERY-THING ABOUT THE BAD BLOOD BETWEEN ERIRI AND ME.

ABOUT THE POACH-ING.

ABOUT IORI.

ABOUT THE RIVALRY.

I DON'T KNOW IF SHE'S TOO FARSIGHTED OR IF SHE CAN'T TELL SHE AND IZUMI-CHAN ARE APPLES AND ORANGES.

YEAH .....

WELL, THIS HAS ALL TURNED INTO A REAL MESS.

OF COURSE, ERIRI...

...IS A MEMBER OF THE CIRCLE TOO.

.....

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

IT REALLY MAKES IT COMPLICATED WHEN THE PERSON INVOLVED ACTS LIKE AN OUTSIDER, YOU KNOW.

HAAAAAAAAH (SIIIGH)

はぁぁぁぁぁ

BOTH HER PRIDE AS A CREATOR AND HER POSITION AS YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

.....

TO SAWAMURA-SAN, IT MUST FEEL LIKE SHE'S GOING TO BE ROBBED OF EVERYTHING.

OF COURSE SHE'S AFRAID.

DOESN'T THAT GO WITHOUT SAYING!?

SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, RINRI-KUN? DO YOU WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWA-MURA-SAN?

SORRY, BUT YOU'RE GETTING OFF TRACK HERE...

PLUS, IZUMI-SAN IS SO FOND OF YOU, RINR-KUN. AND EVEN THOUGH SHE ONLY APPEARED PARTWAY INTO THE STORY, SHE HAS AWESOME STATS RIGHT OFF THE BAT. EVEN IF YOUR STRATEGY TO GET YOUR TOP G RL FAILS, SHE'D DEFINITELY BE THE SAVIOR HEROINE WHO SHOWS UP AND CONFESSES HER LOVE SHE'S THAT TYPE . ... THAT KID MAKES ME S CK.

THIS ISN'T *METRO-NOME IN LOVE!*

DON'T TELL ME YOU WANT TO HAVE A DRAMATIC CHANGE OF MAIN HEROINES MID-STORY?

DO YOU ADORE HER? DO YOU LOVE HER? DO YOU WANT TO HOLD HER FOREV-ER?

YOU WANT TO EMBRACE HER?

SO YOU WANT TO PROTECT HER?

IT WOULD BE A DRAG IF THIS ILL WILL JUST WENT ON.

SO YOU WANT TO CHEER HER UP?

IF YOU LEAVE IT AWHILE, MAYBE IT'LL BE LIKE NOTHING HAPPEN-ED?

BUT THAT..... WON'T WORK WITH HER.

?

BUT THEN OUR GAME WON'T BE READY IN TIME FOR WINTER COMIKET .....

IF YOU'RE SO INDECISIVE, THEN IT'S BETTER YOU DO NOTHING AT ALL AND LEAVE IT TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME, ISN'T IT?

YOU GUYS ARE A PAIN .....

FOR EXAMPLE..... AFTER THE LAST TIME I SAW HER CRY, SEVEN YEARS AGO...

SHE..... CAN HOLD A GRUDGE FOR SO LONG, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

...WE ONLY EVER EXCHANGED A FEW WORDS FOR THREE WHOLE YEARS AFTER.

IT WAS FIVE YEARS BEFORE WE STARTED LENDING EACH OTHER STUFF AGAIN.

AND SEVEN YEARS BEFORE WE COULD TALK NORMALLY.

THE TRUTH IS, SENPAI... WE'VE STILL NEVER FIXED WHAT BROKE BACK THEN.

HUH .....?

ERIRI ISN'T ABOUT TO APOLO-GIZE, AND I HAVEN'T APOLO-GIZED...

IT'S STILL HANGING THERE IN THE AIR BETWEEN US.

WE'RE TOTAL IDIOTS, AREN'T WE .....?

HER...

...AND ME BOTH...

SO..... I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ...

SHE'S GOT A MEAN PERSONALITY, SHE'S TWO-FACED, BOTH OF THEM TERRIBLE— I KNOW THAT!

AND I STILL DON'T TRUST HER, BUT— BUT SHE'S A DEAR FRIEND AND HAS BEEN FOREVER.

...THIS TIME!

AND NOW I'M SO AFRAID THAT WE'LL BE RIPPED APART AGAIN LIKE WE WERE BACK THEN.....!

COULD I FORGIVE ERIRI FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART AGAIN?

COULD ERIRI TRUST ME FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART AGAIN?

... SENPAI .....

I'M SO SCARED .....

PON (PAT)

HM.....

PON

WHEN YOU COUNT ON ME SOMETIMES LIKE THIS, I FEEL FOR YOU.....

I'M SORRY.

EVEN IF YOU'RE BEING TERRIBLE.

DO YOU WANT TO CHEER HER UP?

YES.

DO YOU WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWAMURA-SAN?

YES.

DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT HER?

YEAH, ALL OF US TOGETHER.

NOW LET ME ASK YOU AGAIN.

(GLINT)

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE AMENDS WITH HER?

YES..... THIS TIME, FOR SURE!

DWAH!?

FUU (BLOW)

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO?

WELL THEN, LET ME COME UP WITH A PLAN.

DASH'SH BECASH YOU KEEP UNNESHE-SHARILY PROBOK-ING HER.

MUNNN (STRETCH)

THE FACT IS, I WANT TO PATCH THINGS UP WITH A CERTAIN SOMEONE TOO, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THINK SHE'LL EVER FORGIVE ME.

IDIOTIC .....? LIKE WHAT?

HMM..... IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE FALLEN OUT FOR SOME IDIOTIC REASON, SO MAYBE IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF YOU RECONCILED BY SOME IDIOTIC MEANS AS WELL.

YOU NEED TO WIN THE CHILDHOOD HEROINE STORY-LINE...

...RINRI-KUN!

WIN IT .....?

HI, MOM?

IT SEEMS LIKE I'M GOING TO BE A LITTLE LATE AGAIN TODAY.

READ THE ROOM, DARN YOU!

END

ほ
HOKA (STEAM)
か

HOKA
ほか

OKAY.

LET'S BEGIN TODAY'S CIRCLE ACTIVI-TIES.

HOKA
ほか

BORROWED FROM TOMOYA

THE TWO OF THEM GOT PERMIS-SION TO STAY OVER, AND WE'RE ALL READY TO PULL AN ALL-NIGHTER.

GOKU (GULP)

IT'S ELEVEN P.M. EVERY-ONE'S HAD A BATH.

PARENTS HAVE GONE AWAY FOR OBON

AND I'LL USE THAT TO MAKE THE PLOT.

KATOU-SAN...

WE'LL USE RINRI-KUN'S MEMORIES FOR OUR MATERIAL.

GAH! YOU SAID IT OUT LOUD!

YOU CALLED HER "SUB"!

AND WINNING THE CHILDHOOD FRIEND ROUTE!

ON TODAY'S AGENDA IS A PLOT FOR SUB-HEROINE ERIRI SPENCER SAWA-MURA!

KATOU?

UMM. CAN I OFFER AN OPINION?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

...MAYBE YOU COULD PLAY SOME VIDEO GAMES OR SOMETHING TO KILL TIME.

YES.

OKAY.

WELL, YOU TOLD ME BEFORE TO BECOME A HEROINE, RIGHT, AKI-KUN?

HUH?

I-I SEE...

IN THAT CASE, DON'T YOU HAVE TO SHOW ME AN EXAMPLE FIRST?

ERR, IS THAT KIND OF SCENE HARD TO CREATE?

DID YOU SAY...

...HARD!?

SFX: WHOOSH

THAT'S IT RIGHT THERE!

DUH!

THE KEY THING ABOUT SAWAMURA-SAN ISN'T THAT SHE'S A PRINCESS OR TSUNDERE OR AN ERO-DOUJIN ARTIST ...!

WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT... YES!

SHE'S A MAIDEN AT HEART!

SHE'S A TOTAL CHICK WHO'S WAITING FOR AN OTAKU PRINCE IN A WHITE ITASHA CAR TO COME AND TAKE HER AWAY!

AH! HA HA HA HA!

HOW WEIRD CAN YOU GET!?

THE ONE WHO'S BEING WEIRD RIGHT NOW IS YOU, UTAHA-SENPAI!

ROGER THAT!

YES, MA'AM!

COMMENCE OPERATION: WIN THE CHILDHOOD FRIEND!

IT'S WELLING UP...THE CREATIVE JUICES ARE SURGING UP INSIDE ME LIKE SLUDGE!

CHAPTER 16

Z
Z
Z
z
z
z
z

HFFF...

TEE-HEE!

MMF...

BUT I'LL BE THERE.

SHE MIGHT NOT.

I WONDER IF SAWAMURA-SAN WIL.. GO TO COM.KET

?

KATOU... THANK YOU.

TON

TON (TAP)

I SEE.

OKAY!

YOU'VE SEEN..

...A LOT OF UNCOOL SIDES TO ME SINCE YESTERDAY.

HUH? YOU THINK YESTERDAY WAS THE FIRST TIME?

GAH! CAN THE ONE-LINERS!

I WAS BEING EARNEST FOR ONCE.

BISHI (WHAP)

WELL, YOU'RE FEELING STRANGE AFTER STAYING UP ALL NIGHT.

YOU MAY REGRET IT TILL YOU DIE LATER, BUT THAT'S NOT ON ME.

KATOU ...

...DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STICK WITH ME AS MY MAIN HEROINE, EVEN IF I MAKE SUCH A WORTHLESS PROTAGONIST?

AKI-KUN.

I THINK OUR TEAM WILL LIKELY FALL APART NATURALLY.

IT'S ONLY YOUR PUSHINESS THAT'S BEEN KEEPING US TOGETHER TO BEGIN WITH.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO OVERCOME MY SHORTCOMINGS, SO PLEASE DO NOT FORSAKE ME!

WELL, DO IT QUICK, THEN, WILL YOU?

MAKE SURE NO ONE QUITS THE CIRCLE.

!

OH!

SURE

PATCH THINGS UP BETWEEN SAWA-MURA-SAN AND IZUMI-CHAN.

YUP...

PATCH THINGS UP WITH SAWA-MURA-SAN.

GOT IT.

KATOU... THOSE THINGS ARE...

WE'LL MAKE IT TOGETHER, AKI-KUN...

...THIS AWESOME GAME THAT YOU THOUGHT UP.

...I'M HOPING FOR!

SEE YOU LATER!

...JUST WHAT...

I'M OFF, THEN!

GAYA
GAYA
GAYA

THANK YOU, MOM AND DAD!

WOW! LITTLE LOVE RHAPSODY!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ERIRI!

DODON KABOOM

DON BOOM

Enter the protagonist's name

Eri

WAKU WAKU

WAKU (EXCITED)

IT IS THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT SUMMER FESTIVAL HERE IN THE KINGDOM OF ELDORIA, AND THE CITIZENS REJOICE AS ONE.

DON

NI

DODON

NI NI

AN ESPECIALLY LARGE FIREWORK BLOSSOMS INTO A FLOWER IN THE SOUTHERN NIGHT SKY.

DON

NI

NI

DON

THE REASON FOR THIS IS THE MEREST TRIFLE.

THE KNIGHT SERVIS WAS IN A CARRIAGE ON THE WAY TO TOWN TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL. EN ROUTE, HE HAD A PLEASANT CHAT WITH A LOCAL GIRL...

DON (BOOM)

NI

DODON (KABOOM)

NI NI

...SHE CAN ONLY MEET THEIR BEAUTY WITH A MELANCHOLY EXPRESSION.

AS ERI GAZES UP AT THE FIREWORKS THAT MARK THE FINALE ...

I UNDERSTAND... HE BELONGS TO THAT WORLD.

ERI WANTED TO CUT IN, BUT SHE REFRAINED IN THE END.

I HAVE NO STRENGTHS, NO CHARMS, NO POSITION OF MY OWN. IT HAS ALL BEEN BESTOWED UPON ME.

WHEN DID SUCH DISTANCE COME BETWEEN US?

ERI!

ERI, OVER HERE!

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, WE WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER...

BUT THEN...

ERIRI!

OVER HERE!

TOMOYA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ...?

HUH ...?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE. SHALL WE GO INTO TOWN?

SHH! NOT SO LOUD!

.....

WHAT ARE YOU —?

...ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE SERVIS?

ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE HOLY KNIGHT SERVIS FROM *LITRHAP* ...?

PLEASE CALL ME TOMOYA TONIGHT... YOUR HIGH-NESS.

LET'S BE OFF, THEN! WE'LL TAKE IN THE END OF THE FESTIVAL TOGETHER!

DOOOH (BAM)

... AREN'T YOU EMBAR-RASSED TO BE DOING THIS?

I AM INDEED!

SO MUCH, I COULD DIE!

AND KATOU PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION.

I BORROWED THIS OUTFIT FROM A COSPLAYER THROUGH IORI'S CONNEC-TIONS.

I GOT HER PARENTS' OKAY TODAY AT HER COMIKET TABLE.

BUT!

UTAHA-SENPAI THOUGHT UP THIS SCENARIO FOR ME.

WHY DO I HAVE TO HELP OUT THE COMPETI-TION?

I'M NOT READY TO DIE YET!

IT TOOK THE HELP OF A LOT OF PEOPLE FOR TONIGHT'S OPERATION TO BE A GO.

AND THAT'S WHY...

NOT UNTIL WE MEND OUR FRIEND-SHIP!

TOMOYA ...

HEY, YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE!?

U-UNCLE SAKAKI? I CAN EX—

ERIRI! COME ON!

GA (GRAB)

IT'S ALL RIGHT! HER UNCLE SAKAKI'S IN ON IT TOO!

GASA (RUSTLE)

GASA

GASA

GASA

...AGH!

"I THINK I'VE TWISTED MY ANKLE!"

"OH! OW, OW, OUCH ...!

OH NO! ARE YOU OKAY!?

CAN YOU TOUGH IT OUT FOR JUST A BIT?

UH-HUH ...

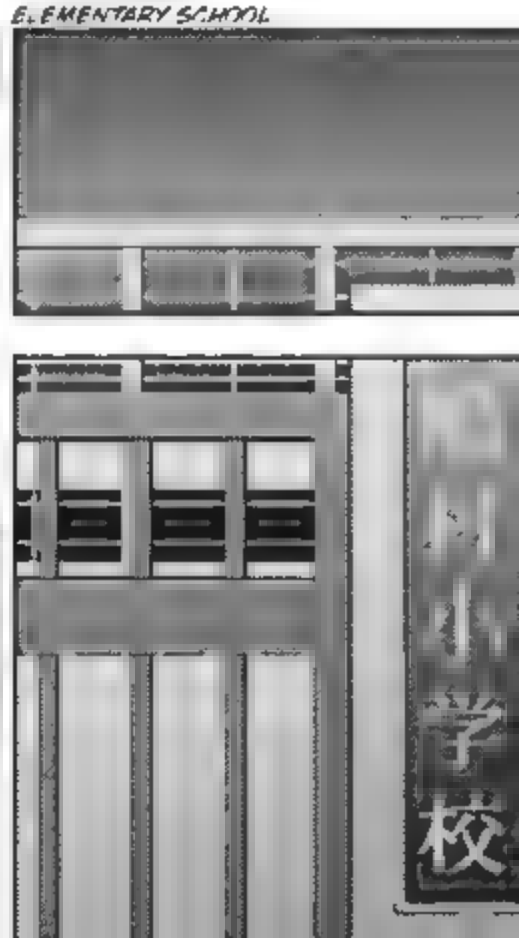
"TO-MOYA... FLEE WITH-OUT ME!"

OH!

RIGHT! THESE ARE LINES FROM THE SERVIS ROUTE!

DON
(BOOM)

THEY... REBUILT IT... A YEAR AGO... I'M PRETTY SURE...
THE SCHOOL BUILDING... IT'S ALL NEW.
HNZZ
HEE
K-SHEE
P


SIGN: SHIMAMURA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
学
校

WELL, IT'S A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

MAYBE THEY DID, BUT THIS SCHOOL STILL SUCKS.

SO THE TWISTED ANKLE REALLY WAS JUST AN ACT, HUH...?

RRGH ...!

UGH, YOU WUSS.

SUTA すた

SUTA (STEP) たすた

I'LL CATCH YOUR FOUR-EYES DISEASE!

DON'T COME ANY CLOSER, OTAKU!

THAT WHOLE SCENE BEFORE... YOU DIDN'T COME UP WITH IT YOURSELF, DID YOU?

NOT REALLY.

UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA?

AND KATOL, I GUESS.

SHE'S THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED *LITRHAP.*

YOU'RE A COWARD, TOMOYA...

YUP.

HOW CAN WE PATCH THIS UP NOW?

ERIRI...

GETTING EVERYONE TO HELP WAS GUTLESS.

AND USING *LITRHAP* AS A PRETEXT WAS EVEN WORSE.

IT WAS THE FIRST TITLE YOU EVER MADE ME GO CRAZY ABOUT.

NO, THAT—

YOU MUST BE GLAD YOU DISCOV-ERED A GOOD BOOK.

BETTER YET, ITS AUTHOR IS AN OLD FRIEND AND YOUR NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE... HOW NICE FOR YOU.

AND NOW IT'S BECOME THE THING THAT CONNECTS YOU AND THAT IZUMI GIRL.

TOMOYA, YOU LOOKED AT HER WITH THE SAME GAGA EYES YOU DO WITH UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA.

IF I HADN'T INTRO-DUCED YOU TO *LITRHAP* ...

IF I'D NEVER MET YOU —!

IT'S ALL THANKS TO ME, ISN'T IT...!?

BUT THIS IS—

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW...

DO YOU JUST WANT ME TO APOL-OGIZE?

HUHN ...!?

...SO YOU'RE NOT GONNA SAY SORRY EITHER?

WHAT THE HELL!? WHAT DID I DO TO YOU!?

FOR WHAT YOU DID TO ME IS IT TOO LATE FOR THAT TOO?

THIS IS AS FAR AS SENPAI WROTE ...

THERE ARE ONLY THREE MORE LINES.

Through hardship comes strength.
Pray for good luck.
And hang in there, Rinri-kun.

IN OTHER WORDS, FROM HERE ON...

...I'M ON MY OWN.

( )

ALL THOSE YEARS, I NEVER SAID THIS, BUT...

...I REALLY HATED YOU!

WE HAD FUN TALKING ABOUT GAMES AND ANIME EVERY DAY...

...BUT THOSE KIDS KEPT BUGGING US...

NOW SHE HATES YOU!

NYAH-HA! SHE HATES YOU!

YOU...

...REALLY LET THEIR BULLYING GET TO YOU.

BUT I STUCK IT OUT.

I MADE LOTS OF GEEK FRIENDS, PUT UP WITH THE ANNOYED ADULTS, AND SHUT THOSE KIDS UP.

I REBUILT OUR OTAKU KINGDOM.

B L

NO ONE'S GONNA TEASE US ANY-MORE!

LET'S TALK AGAIN! ABOUT ANIME AND GAMES AND STUFF!

POPULAR GIRLS GROUP

BUT EVEN SO...

ERIRI!

...

...AND I'D HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY THE NEW FRIENDS I'D MADE.

IF I HAD, EVERYONE WOULD'VE STOPPED TALKING TO ME AGAIN...

BUT YOU HAD ME! WASN'T I YOUR FRIEND ...?

...DIDN'T MEAN I COULD GO BACK TO MY OLD SELF...

JUST 'COS YOU SAID THAT...

LET'S GO, GIRLS!

BUT SOMEONE COULD'VE WRECKED THAT ALL OVER AGAIN!

SO I HAD TO GIVE UP BEING AN OTAKU!

I HAD TO STOP TALKING TO YOU, TOMOYA!

YOU DIDN'T GIVE IT UP!

YOU EVEN STARTED MAKING STUFF FOR US!

AND I HAD TO REALLY HIDE

I MADE IT! SO SURE THAT NO ONE EVER FOUND OUT!

THEN WHY DID YOU CAST ME ASIDE!?

YOU WOULDN'T GO INTO HIDING WITH ME!

YOU WOULDN'T STOP EVEN ON THE SURFACE!

IF I'D TALKED TO YOU, IT WOULD'VE GOTTEN OUT THAT I WAS STILL AN OTAKU ...!

IT WOULD'VE SPREAD THROUGH THE GIRLS, AND I'D BE ALL ALONE AGAIN!

ARE YOU SAYING WE WOULDN'T HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THIS IF YOU HAD!?

SO MEANINGLESS TITTERING WITH THOSE TWO-FACED, SHALLOW PEOPLE WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TALKING ABOUT ANIME WITH ME!?

IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT WAS MORE OR LESS IMPORT-ANT!

APOLOGIZE!

WHY WOULD I!?

WHY DID YOU TREAT ME THAT WAY ...?

YOU WERE WRONG!

TSUU (DRIP)

WHY DID Y—

... WHAT THE —?

T-TOMO-YA?

I WON'T... NOT EVER.

APOLO-GIZE... APOLO-GIZE!

ARGH ...! ERIRI... Y-YOU IDIOT...

N-NO ...!

I WON'T APOLO-GIZE, NO MATTER WHAT.

CRAAAP ...!

TOMOYA ...

... DON'T YOU KNOW ...

...HOW MUCH I CRIED ...!?

UU

AFTER ALL THAT HURT...

...WHY DO I STILL HAVE TO APOLO-GIZE!?

WAH.

AFTER ALL THAT PUNISH-MENT, WHY DO I HAVE TO ATONE EVEN MORE!?

HIC

OUR FRIEND-SHIP WAS OVER, WE COULDN'T EVEN TALK AT SCHOOL ANYMORE...

HIC

...AND I HAD TO IGNORE YOU!

IF YOU WON'T APOL-OGIZE, THEN I WON'T EITHER.

GUH!

(UZU SNIFFLE)

HOW COULD YOU NOT FEEL LIKE THAT ABOUT MINE?

HUH.

WHY? HOW COME ...?

GGH

HIC

I WON'T APOLO-GIZE.

UTAHA-SENPAI'S BOOKS ARE UNREAL.

IZUMI-CHAN'S BOOK IS UNREAL.

HIC!

ARE YOU SAYING IT MAKES ME LESS THAN THAT KID?

HIC

WELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?

HIC!

YOU DRAW EXACTLY WHAT I WANNA SEE.

HIC

IT'S JUST WHAT YOU EXPECT.

'COS I UNDER-STAND YOUR BOOK.

HIC!

HGH

I'M THROUGH PULLING PUNCHES—

WHA —!?

YES, IT DOES! YOU'RE LESS THAN HER! YOU'RE INFERIOR! YOU'RE NO GOOD!

YOU LACK TRUE TAL-ENT!

YOUR ART AND STORIES FAIL TO DEFY EXPEC-TATION IN ANY WAY!

THERE ARE NO SURPRISES AT ALL!

WHY SHOULD I GET EXCITED ABOUT THAT!?

AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY! SKILLS ALONE AREN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU AWESOME!

LOOKING AT YOUR ART PISSES ME OFF LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS!

BIKI

BIKI (SNAP)

AND IF I'M STILL NOT GOOD ENOUGH, THEN WHAT AM I S'POSED TO DO!?

I'M WORKING AS HARD AS I CAN!

WHAT DO I DO IF I DON'T HAVE ANY TALENT !?

I'M PUTTING MYSELF THROUGH THE WRINGER IN WAYS YOU KNOW AND DON'T KNOW ABOUT!

GA (GRAB)

BUT RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE LACKING! YOU'RE NOT AWE-SOME!

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE GOT TALENT, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW HARD YOU'VE STRUG-GLED!

HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW!?

I CAN'T PUSH MY-SELF ANY-MORE!

I TRIED AS HARD AS I COULD! I HID IT FROM EVERY-ONE—

BUT I STILL WANTED TO PROVE MYSELF!

I WANTED TO HAVE MY REVENGE, AND IN THIS END, THIS IS WHERE I AM, SEE!?

YES! THIS IS HOW FAR YOU'VE COME! YOU'RE FAST, YOU'RE GOOD, YOU'RE CONSISTENT!

SO NOW BECOME AWE-SOME!

STAY FAST, STAY GOOD, STAY CONSIS-TENT, BUT SHOW ME YOU CAN BE AMAZING TOO!

I CAN'T! I'VE REACHED THE LIMIT OF MY TALENT!

NONE OF THAT MATTERS! YOU EITHER WORK EVEN HARDER THAN YOU DO NOW, OR ONE DAY, MAYBE YOU'LL JUST BLOSSOM OUT OF THE BLUE! LET ME SEE IT HAPPEN!

TH... THAT'S ...

...EASY ENOUGH TO SAY...

BUT HOW DO I WORK HARDER THAN I AM NOW?

HOW DO I MAKE MY TALENT BLOOM?

DON'T ASK ME. WORK IT OUT FOR YOUR-SELF.

THINK. THEN THINK SOME MORE.

FIGHT. AND FIGHT SOME MORE.

WIN, WIN, WIN...

TH- THEN...

...IF I GET THERE...

WILL YOU COME AND BUY MY BOOKS?

...WILL YOU BE ONE OF MY DIE-HARD FANS?

THEN YOU'LL BE BEYOND IZUMI— OR ANYONE FOR THAT MATTER...

...EVEN BETTER THAN AKANE KOUSAKA! DO IT!

OF COURSE I WILL.

OBVIOUSLY.

I'LL TAKE THE FIRST TRAIN AND BE FIRST IN LINE TO BUY THEM.

THEN I'LL GO TO THE BACK OF THE LINE TO LINE UP AND BUY THEM AGAIN.

AGAIN AND AGAIN, IN AN ENDLESS LOOP, UNTIL YOU'RE SOLD OUT.

AND I'LL GIVE THEM TO ALL MY FRIENDS TO GET THE WORD OUT...

AND THEN ...

... FINALLY I'LL SAY—

"Y'KNOW, KASHI-WAGI-SENSEI IS A FRIEND OF MINE!"
OKAY!?

TOMO-YA...

THAT'S ...

HMPH.

YOU DOUJIN EX-PLOIT-ER.

I'LL DO IT.....!

I'LL DRAW SO WELL, EVERYONE WILL HAVE TO ADMIT I'M AWESOME!

SHALL WE GO HOME, TOMOYA?

I MEAN, SERVIS.

OH...!

!

WE'LL PUT OFF THE RECON-CILIATION, THEN.

SURE. I'LL BE WAITING ...

SORRY, SENPAI, KATOU...I COULDN'T FIX THE BREACH.

BUT IT'S ALL GOOD.

'COS WE'VE LOOKED AHEAD AND TAKEN OUR FIRST STEP FORWARD.

LET'S!

TO BE CONTINUED

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

THE
"MEGU-TAN
APPEARANCE FIRST"
SECTION
(ETC.)
YADDA
YADDA
PART 3
JERSEY AND BLOOMERS

TRANSLATION NOTES

COMMON HONORIFICS
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness; if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
-san: The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.
-sama: Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
-kun: Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
-chan (also *-tan*): An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals of either gender.
-senpai: An honorific used to address upperclassmen or more experienced coworkers.
-sensei: A respectful honorific for teachers, artists, or high-level professionals.

PAGE 38
The **mock trial** here is an homage to the *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* video game franchise from Capcom, from the jabbing objections to the brushy interjection balloons that continue up to the appearance of Izumi.

PAGE 43
Comiket, a portmanteau of Comic Market, is the world's largest *doujinshi* fair. Founded in 1975, it is now held twice a year (August and December) in Tokyo and draws crowds exceeding 500,000 heads per show.

PAGE 43
Doujinshi (*doujin*, for short) is self-published art, comics, video games, or novels produced (usually) by amateurs and derivative of existing properties.

PAGE 45
Kouhai, a companion word to *senpai*, is used when talking about one's underclassman, junior, or protégé. It can be used in academic, business, or team settings.

PAGE 46
Miiin is the sound effect for the chirping or buzzing of cicadas, the presence of which is very evocative of summer in Japan.

PAGE 66
A **ward** (*ku*) is a subdivision of a Japanese city as decided by the government.

PAGE 73
Clear files are folders made from durable plastic sealed on two sides for housing a few sheets of paper (standard size is A4). They are often sold as fan goods for anime and manga series and feature key art from those series.

PAGE 75
When Izumi mistakenly refers to Megumi as **Kamo-san**, Tomoya starts thinking wordplay. In Japanese name order, Megumi is Katou Megumi. Taking Izumi's blooper into account, it becomes Kamo Megumi, which sounds just like *kamome-gumi*. This means "sea gull group" and could be either a company or circle name, or the name given to a kindergarten class (often named after animals and plants).

PAGE 98
The **age of legal adulthood in Japan** is twenty years old, and pornographic material is often restricted from those under eighteen, so

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

TRANSLATION NOTES

pretty much everyone in the story is too young to be reading Eriri's *doujinshi*, including Eriri herself! She would also not be allowed to sell her work, but she has help from her dad, as she mentioned in Volume 1.

PAGE 99

The **cosplay outfit** shown here belongs to Shimakaze from *Kantai* ("Fleet") *Collection* (*KanColle*), a Japanese web game that involves collecting cards of sailing vessels—anthropomorphized as pretty girls—in order to build squadrons. The character is based on the one-of-a-kind Japanese destroyer of the same name built by the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II.

PAGE 129

Obon is a Buddhist festival to celebrate the spirits of one's ancestors. It lasts three days and typically falls in July.

PAGE 131

Tsundere is a compound term derived from the words *tsuntsun* ("disdainful, prickly") and *deredere* ("affectionate, fawning") that refers to a person who is initially abrasive or combative but softens over time or reveals a warm inner nature.

PAGE 131

Itasha is the word for a car that has been decorated all over with anime decals and so on.

HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND ❸

TAKESHI MORIKI
Original Story: FUMIAKI MARUTO
Character Design: KUREHITO MISAKI

Translation: Kumar Sivasubramanian
Translation Consultant: Chitoku Teshima
Lettering: Phil Christie

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

SAENAI HEROINE NO SODATE-KATA Volume 3
©TAKESHI MORIKI 2014
©FUMIAKI MARUTO, KUREHITO MISAKI 2014.
First published in Japan in 2014 by KADOKAWA CORPORATION, Tokyo.
English translation rights reserved by YEN PRESS, LLC under the license from KADOKAWA COPORATION, Tokyo through TUTTLE-MORI AGENCY, Inc., Tokyo.

English translation © 2016 by Yen Press, LLC

Yen Press, LLC supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact the publisher. Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Yen Press
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10104

Visit us at yenpress.com
facebook.com/yenpress
twitter.com/yenpress
yenpress.tumblr.com

First Yen Press Edition: July 2016

Yen Press is an imprint of Yen Press, LLC.
The Yen Press name and logo are trademarks of Yen Press, LLC.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015952583

ISBNs: 978-0-316-31081-9 (paperback)
978-0-316-31082-6 (ebook)
978-0-316-31084-0 (app)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

BVG

Printed in the United States of America